



William R. Steinhaus
County Executive

March 31, 2004

Hon. Vincent L. Leibell III
1441 Route 22, Suite 205
Brewster, NY 10509

Dear Senator Leibell:

I wrote to you nearly a month ago to request you sponsor and support legislation in the Senate to support a cap on the local cost of the state imposed Medicaid mandate. To date, we have not received a response from you to our letter.

Since the writing of that letter, New York State has taken from the Dutchess County treasury an additional \$3 million as a mandated expense to local property taxpayers and a crushing burden to our other county services we are struggling to adequately fund.

I am writing again today to underscore the urgency for **immediate Medicaid relief in this year's state budget**. I must go on the record once again to emphasize how negatively this one state program impacts county governments and local taxpayers.

Dutchess County is expected to spend \$48 million in 2004 to fund the State's Medicaid program. That amount could support for an entire year our county's cost for the Office for the Aging, Health Department, Department of Mental Hygiene, Youth Department, Office of Veterans Affairs, all Mass Transportation bus costs, all Department of Public Works maintenance of county roads and bridges, the Sheriff's Office law enforcement unit, the Emergency Response Department and funding for not-for-profit community agencies – all critically important programs to the taxpayers of Dutchess County.

Relief for local taxpayers will hinge on an agreement by the legislators in Albany to reach consensus and make the right decision for your constituents. Therefore, I again urge you to join the State Assembly and the Democrat caucus of the Senate and to introduce legislation in support of the Local Taxpayer Relief Act of 2004, NYS bill (A.9924). This legislation would limit the annual local share of Medicaid by capping the amount paid by counties. It's critical that a plan of action begin for the state to take back the fiscal responsibility of its own state program.

Sincerely,

William R. Steinhaus
Dutchess County Executive

Cc: NYS Assembly Delegation Representing Dutchess County
All County Legislators
Robert Allers, Commissioner, Dept. of Social Services
Media